



January 7, 2022

To the Oklahoma State Board of Education,

The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) is pleased to support the proposed Oklahoma Academic Standards for physical education and health education. TSET has a constitutional mandate to support programs that improve the health of Oklahomans, especially programs benefitting children. The TSET Board of Directors has passed resolutions in support of health education and other measures to curb the rise in childhood obesity.

Because healthy behaviors learned early in life are more likely to become lifelong habits, it is vital that the youngest Oklahomans are provided with comprehensive health and physical education. These academic standards do that, while also integrating health education with other coursework and academic objectives.

That integration will provide a great opportunity for health topics to be taught across multiple disciplines throughout the school environment. We believe this integration is a necessary approach for implementing comprehensive health education.

Additionally, the proposed standards acknowledge the importance of outdoor activities, address mental health as well as physical health and encourage young people to develop health and fitness knowledge and habits that can be continued into adulthood.

Oklahoma, like much of the nation, has seen a rise in childhood obesity and that trend will have repercussions for decades. It has even been predicted that the youngest Oklahoma generation may be the first to experience shorter average lifespans than their parents.

By ensuring that Oklahoma students receive appropriate health education and physical education, these academic standards are a good first step in reversing those troubling trends and improving the health of Oklahomans.

Sincerely,

Julie Bisbee  
Executive Director